## CONGENITAL MALARIA

It has been a disputed point for years as to whether malaria can or can not be transmitted from the mother to the foetus. The possibility of such an occurrence seems not wholly unreasonable, in view of what we know to exist in the case of certain bacterial infections. Many observers assume this to be the case, but positive proof is as yet wanting. Among a number of doubtful cases in literature, the most positive appears to be that of Duchek, reported by Griesinger (Traité des maladies infect., 2 édit; French translation, 1877, p. 20). In this instance the child born of a malarious mother died shortly after birth, presenting, on autopsy, an enlarged pigmented spleen, and showing, further, pigment in the portal vein.

Since the discovery of the parasite, however, no one has been able to bring positive evidence of the congenital presence of parasites in the blood of the newborn child, or of the development of true malarial fever in the infant where the possibility of post-partum infection was out of the question. On the other hand, a number of instances have been reported where, in abortions occurring during pernicious malarial infections, the foetus was found quite free from parasites.

Bignami reported two cases of abortion during pernicious paroxysms, one at the third and the other at the sixth month. The mothers died, and while the organs of the parent in each instance presented the appearance usual in pernicious fever, in neither case did the foetus show organisms or any sign of a previous infection.

Bastianelli also made an autopsy upon a woman dead of pernicious fever who had aborted at the sixth month. The mother's organs contained an abundance of parasites and pigment, while the child, upon careful examination, showed neither parasites, pigment, nor evidences of an antecurrent infection.

Thayer, W. S.: *Lectures on the Malarial Fevers.* New York, Appleton, 1897, pp. 95-96.